

CLAIMS :

1. A method of joining an end of a pair of zipper profiles, the method comprising:

5 bringing the zipper profiles into engagement with each other at least over an end portion at which the profiles are to be joined;

introducing a heated probe into the engaged end portions of the zipper profiles in order to form a recess in the zipper profile material in the region of the probe;

withdrawing the probe; and

applying external pressure to the end portion of the zipper.

15 2. A method according to claim 1, in which the pressure is applied in the absence of external heat.

3. A method according to claim 2, in which the pressure is applied as the sole external means of joining the profile 20 end portions.

4. A method according to any preceding claim, in which the probe is introduced into the profile end portions in a direction substantially longitudinally of the profile lengths.

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5. A method according to any preceding claim, in which the recess is formed at least partially by vaporisation of the zipper profile material.

30 6. A method according to any preceding claim carried out simultaneously on both ends of the zipper profiles.

7. An apparatus for joining the ends of a pair of zipper profiles, the apparatus comprising a means for 35 receiving a pair of zipper profile lengths in engagement with

each other over at least over an end portion at which the profiles are to be joined, a probe which is movable between a first position in which, in use, it is clear of the engaged profile lengths and a second position in which it has 5 penetrated into the material of the end portions, means for heating the probe, and means for applying external pressure to the zipper profile end portions when the probe is in its second position.

10 8. An apparatus according to claim 7, in which the probe is movable between its first and second positions in a direction substantially longitudinally of the profiles.

9. An apparatus according to claim 7 or 8, in which the 15 heating means comprises and electrical heating element within a rear portion of the probe.

10. An apparatus according to any of claims 7 to 9, including a further said probe, heating means and external 20 pressure means at the opposite end of the receiving means.

11. A method of joining an end of a pair of zipper profiles, the method being substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the drawing.

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12. An apparatus for joining an end of a pair of zipper profiles, the apparatus being substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the drawing.